

THE HOUSE OF A THOUSAND CANDLES

CHAPTER XIII.

A Pair of Eavesdroppers.

When I came down after dressing for dinner, Bates called my attention to a belated mail. I pounced eagerly upon a letter in Laurence Donovan's well-known hand, bearing, to my surprise, an American stamp and post-marked New Orleans. It was dated, however, at Vera Cruz, Mexico, December 15, 1901, and gave a characteristically racy account of his efforts to dodge the British detective who was pursuing him. He hoped, he wrote, to cross the borders into Texas, but declared that he should keep clear of Indiana, as he was unacquainted with the Indian language.

Bates gave me my coffee in the library, as I wished to settle down to an evening of reflection without delay. Larry's report of himself was not reassuring, despite its cheerful tone. I knew that if he had any idea of trying to reach me he would not mention it in a letter which might fall into the hands of the authorities, and the hope that he might join me grew. I was not, perhaps, entitled to a companion at Glenarm under the terms of my exile, but as a matter of protection in the existing condition of affairs there could be no legal or moral reason why I should not defend myself against my foes, and Larry was an ally worth having.

My neighbor, the chaplain, had inadvertently given me a bit of important news; and my mind kept reverting to the fact that Morgan was reporting his injury to the executor of my grandfather's estate in New York. Everything else that had happened was tame and unimportant compared with this. Why had John Marshall Glenarm made Arthur Pickering the executor of his estate? He knew that I detested him, that Pickering's noble aims and high ambitions had been praised by my family until his very name sickened me; and yet my own grandfather had thought it wise to intrust his fortune and my future to the man of all men who was most repugnant to me. I rose and paced the floor in anger.

My rage must fasten upon some one, and Bates was the nearest target for it. I went to the kitchen, where he usually spent his evenings, to vent my feelings upon him, only to find him gone. I climbed to his room and found it empty. Very likely he was off conferring with his friend and fellow conspirator, the caretaker, and I fumed with rage and disappointment. I was thoroughly tired, as tired as on days when I had beaten my way through tropical jungles without food or water; but I wished, in my impotent anger against I knew not what agencies, to punish myself,—to induce an utter weariness that would send me exhausted to bed.

The snow in the highway was well beaten down and I swung off countryward past St. Agatha's. A gray mist hung over the fields in whirling clouds, breaking away occasionally and showing the throbbing winter stars. The walk and my interest in the alternation of starlighted and mist-wrapped landscape won me to a better state of mind, and after tramping a couple of miles, I set out for home. Several times on my tramp I had caught myself whistling the air of a majestic old hymn, and smiled, remembering my young friend Olivia, and her playing in the chapel. She was an amusing child; the thought of her further lifted my spirit; and I turned into the school park when I reached the outer gate with a half-recognized wish to pass near the barracks where she spent her days.

At the school gate the lamps of a carriage suddenly blurred in the mist. Carriages are not common in this region, and I was not surprised to find that this was the familiar village hack that met trains day and night at Annandale. Some parent, I conjectured, paying a visit to St. Agatha's; possibly—and the thought gave me pleasure—perhaps the father of Miss Olivia Gladys Armstrong had come to carry her home for a stricter discipline than Sister Theresa's school afforded.

The driver sat asleep on his box, and I passed him and went on into the grounds. A whim seized me to visit the crypt of the chapel and examine the opening to the tunnel. As I passed the little group of school buildings a man came hurriedly from one of them and turned toward the chapel.

I first thought it was Stoddard, but I could not make him out in the mist and in my uncertainty waited for him to put 20 paces between us before I followed.

He strode into the chapel porch with an air of assurance and I heard him address some one who had been waiting. The mist was now so heavy that I could not see my hand before my face, and I stole forward until I heard the voices of two men distinctly.

"Bates!"

"Yes, sir."

I heard feet scraping on the stone floor of the porch.

"This is a devil of a place to talk in, but it's the best we can do. Did the young man know I sent for you?"

"No, sir. I kept him quite busy with his books and papers."

"Humph! We can never be sure of him."

"I suppose that is correct, sir." "Well, you and Morgan are a fine pair, I must say! I thought he had some sense and that you'd see to it that he didn't make a mess of this whole thing. He's in bed now with a hole in his arm and you've got to go on alone."

"I'll do my best, Mr. Pickering." "Don't call me by name, you idiot. We're not advertising our business from the house-tops."

"Certainly not," replied Bates humbly.

The blood was roaring through my head, and my hands clenched as I stood there listening to this colloquy. Pickering's voice was—and is—unmistakable. There was always a purring softness in it. He used to remind me at school of a sleek, complacent cat, and I hate cats with particular loathing.

"Is Morgan lying or not when he says he shot himself accidentally?" demanded Pickering petulantly.

"I only know what I heard from the gardener here at the school. You'll understand, I hope, that I can't be seen going to Morgan's house."

"Of course not. But he says you haven't played fair with him, that you even attacked him a few days after Glenarm came."

"Yes, and he hit me over the head with a club. It was his indiscretion, sir. He wanted to go through the library in broad daylight, and it wasn't any use, anyhow. There's nothing there."

"But I don't like the looks of this shooting. Morgan's sick and out of his head. But a fellow like Morgan isn't likely to shoot himself accidentally, and now that it's done the work's stopped and the time is running on. What do you think Glenarm suspects?"

"I can't tell, sir, but mighty little, I should say. The shot through the window the first night he was here seemed to shake him a trifle, but he's quite settled down now, I should say, sir. That shot of Morgan's was a great mistake. The young gentleman isn't to be frightened away as easily as that."

"Morgan's a fool. But what is Glenarm doing? He probably doesn't spend much time on this side of the fence—doesn't haunt the chapel, I fancy?"

"Lord, no! I hardly suspect the young gentleman of being a praying man."

"You haven't seen him prowling about the house analyzing the architecture?"

"Not a bit of it, sir! He hasn't, I should say, what his revered grandfather called the analytical mind."

Pickering stamped his feet upon the paved porch floor in a way that I remembered of old. It marked a conclusion, and preluded serious mistakes. "Now, Bates," he said with a ring of authority and speaking in a louder key than he had yet used, "it's your duty under all circumstances to help discover the hidden assets of the estate. We've got to pluck the mystery from that architectural monster over there, and the time for doing it is short enough. Mr. Glenarm was a rich man. To my own knowledge he had a couple of millions, and he couldn't have spent it all on that house. He reduced his bank account to a few thousand dollars and swept out his safety deposit boxes with a broom before his last trip to Vermont. He didn't die with the stuff in his clothes, did he?"

"Lord bless me, no, sir! There was little enough cash to bury him, with you out of the country and me alone with him."

"He was a crank and I suppose he got a lot of satisfaction out of burying his money. But this hunt for it isn't funny. I supposed of course we'd dig it up before Glenarm got here or I shouldn't have been in such a hurry to send for him. But it's over there somewhere in the grounds. There must be a plan of the house that would help. I'll give you a thousand dollars the day you wire me you have found any sort of clue."

"Thank you, sir."

"I don't want thanks, I want the money or securities, or whatever it is. I've got to go back to my car now, and you'd better skip home. You needn't tell your young master that I've been here."

I was trying hard to remember, as I stood there with clenched hands outside the chapel porch, that Arthur Pickering's name was written in the list of directors of one of the largest trust companies in America and that he belonged to the most exclusive clubs in New York. I had come out for my walk with only an innershirt over my dinner jacket, and I was thoroughly chilled by the cold mist. I was experiencing, too, an inner cold as I reflected upon the greed and perfidy of man.

"Keep an eye on Morgan," said Pickering.

"Certainly, sir."

"And be careful what you write or wire."

"I'll mind those points, sir. But I'd suggest, if you please, sir—"

"Well!" demanded Pickering impatiently.

"That you should call at the house. It would look rather strange to the

young gentleman if you'd come to St. Agatha's and not see him."

"I haven't the slightest errand with him. And besides I haven't time. If he learns that I've been here you may say that my business was with Sister Theresa and that I regretted very much not having the opportunity to call on him."

The irony of this was not lost on Bates, who chuckled softly. He came out into the open and turned away toward the Glenarm gate. Pickering passed me, so near that I might have put out my hand and touched him, and in a moment I heard the carriage drive off rapidly toward the village.

I heard Bates running home over the snow and listened to the clatter of the village hack as it bore Pickering back to Annandale.

Then out of the depths of the chapel porch—out of the depths of time and space, it seemed, so dazed I stood—some one came swiftly toward me, some one light of foot like a woman, ran down the walk a little way into the fog and paused.

An exclamation broke from me. "Eavesdropping for two!"—it was the voice of Olivia. "I'd take pretty



"I'd Take Pretty Good Care of Myself if I Were You, Squire Glenarm."

good care of myself if I were you, Squire Glenarm! Good night!" "Good-by!" I faltered, as she sped away in the mist toward St. Agatha's.

(To Be Continued.)

West Virginia Climate.

(Morgantown, W. Va. Chronicle.)

If a local survey only is had, there are grounds for the claim of the old resident that the climate changes. In some restricted districts the change is very marked, due, however, to local influence, and not to anything astronomical or geological.

Let one narrow locality be taken to illustrate this point. The Canaan valley, in Tucker county, was, up to about 1881, an almost unbroken wilderness of laurel, spruce, hemlock, beech and birch. Its elevation is from 3000 to 3400 feet, and its area about 100 square miles. Before the timber was cut and burnt off it was usual for the first snows of autumn to lie unmelted beneath the packed laurel until nearly or quite the first of June. The winter snows accumulated to a depth of six feet in some years, and nearly always as much as three or four feet. The ground was actually covered with snow half the year. The melting of this snow kept the waters flush until late in the spring.

The whole valley has been stripped of its timber. Ax and fire have laid the ground and rocks bare. Probably as much snow falls as in the days of the forest, but it melts, and the ground is laid bare from time to time during the winter; and spring is a month earlier than it used to be, because the snow vanishes a month earlier. . . . The old hunters may be found living on the borders of that changed valley today who will declare that the seasons are growing milder, and they are right, so far as their little world extends. So, when we hear some old resident remark that seasons are changing, let us, instead of flatly contradicting him, see if some local condition may not give him excuse for his statement.

If the unrestrained destruction of the forests on the mountain ranges of West Virginia continue for another generation no one will dispute that the climate has changed. The water course will run dry or nearly dry in early summer instead of remaining full and cold for months after that time, and sheltered ravines and flats which held the winter snow until almost summer will become dry gravel beds and stone heaps by the middle of June.

PROOF OF MERIT.

The proof of the merits of a plaster is the cures it effects, and the voluntary testimonials of those who have used Alcock's Plaster during the past sixty years is unimpeachable evidence of their superiority. I should convince the most skeptical. Self-praise is no recommendation, but certificates from those who have used them are.

Alcock's are the original and genuine porous plasters and have never been equalled by those who have sought to trade upon their reputation by making plasters with holes in them. Avoid substitutes as you would counterfeit money.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

Harrodsburg, Ky., March 21.—James M. Crutchfield, aged 100 years, walked into town today from his home on Kentucky river, to have his pension increased under the new ruling. In his declaration he stated that he was born in Claiborne county, Tennessee, April 15, 1907. He served through the Mexican and Civil Wars.

Two aged men, brothers-in-law, were buried in the same grave at Benton. Both were over eighty years old.

The little 2 year old daughter of Jerry Thacker, who moved from Centerville to Central City, was brought back for burial last Sunday. Measles was the cause of its death.

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Mt. Sterling, March 21.—Almanza David, through his attorneys, E. W. Seuff and John A. Judy, of this city, today filed a novel and unique suit in the Montgomery Circuit Court against the city of Mt. Sterling. The suit is to collect \$75 alleged to be due byrd for illegal fines collected by the city. Mt. Sterling, under an ordinance passed by the City Council, has allowed the police judge to tax \$3 costs to every fine—\$2 for the attorney's fees and \$1 for the arresting officer, and several hundred fines have been levied in that manner within the past five years. Recently the Court of Appeals rendered an opinion declaring such fees illegal, with the exception of 50 cents for the arresting officer. Mr. David, having been arrested thirty times within the past five years, and having paid his fines, has filed this suit to receive the illegal part of the money paid. The case will come up for trial at the April term, and the outcome will be watched with intense interest by attorneys throughout the case. It is the only suit of the kind ever filed in Kentucky, and if Mr. David wins Messrs. Seuff and Judy will at once file about 250 other suits.

The city will vigorously defend the suit, as if it goes against them they will have to pay back to people fined in the Police Court under the ordinance several thousand dollars.

Maysville, March 20.—Miss Allie Ryder met with an unfortunate accident here to-day. She has been using an eye wash for one of her eyes and picked up a bottle supposed to contain the wash and put two drops in her eye. It was carbolic acid and before a physician could be summoned the acid had destroyed the sight of that eye.

Fred Stewart, who offered to accept a verdict of life imprisonment on a murder charge at Harrodsburg, but who was forced into trial, was found guilty, in spite of his plea of insanity, and sentenced to a life term in the penitentiary. He killed his rival in love.

Harrodsburg, Ky., March 21.—Near Buena Vista, just over the Mercer county line in Garrard county, is said to be a wild woman, who roams among the cliffs of the Kentucky river like a wild beast. The woman was first seen a few days since by Tim Peters, a farm hand employed by A. D. Scott, Postmaster of Buena Vista.

As devoid of clothing as was Diana, this unfortunate yet beautiful woman walked up on Peters as he was at work in the forest on the Kentucky river cliffs, chopping wood. The woman's hair, Peters says, was brown, but disheveled, her finger and toe nails were long, but her features were even and her face was pretty.

Frightened at the apparition, Peters stood speechless as the woman approached him, her head nodding as if she did not see him nor realize that she was in the presence of a man. Badly frightened, Peters called to the woman to halt after she had come within ten feet of him, and as if startled by his face, she stopped suddenly, turned and ran off into the woods.

Lexington, Ky., March 21.—Faithful Fido, the family dog of Clifford Graves, a Woodland county farmer, today assisted in saving two human lives.

An infuriated bull had a negro down, going him to death, when Graves came to the rescue. Unable to drive the bull away from its intended victim, Graves attacked the beast with his pocketknife, plunging the blade into its neck. Madened by the pain, the animal turned upon Graves, who sought safety in flight. The bull, however, overtook and attacked him, breaking two of his ribs. He would have been killed had it not been for his faithful dog, which seized the bull's throat and detracted its attention from Graves. Both Graves and the negro in the interval escaped from the lot. Fido also escaped.

Hopkinsville, Ky., March 21.—With his six feet eight inches of height and his 275 pounds avoirdupois, John Sargent has long enjoyed the distinction of being the largest man in this end of Kentucky, but recently he has added to his laurels in this respect by demonstrating that he also possesses the largest feet anywhere in this region.

Through their local agents a shoe manufacturing company offered a handsome pair of patent leather shoes, size sixteen, on a double E last, to the man whose feet they would fit. Scores of big-footed people tried the shoes, but none of them could wear the enormous "skates." Finally Mr. Sargent heard of the offer and tried on the shoes, and they were found to be a perfect fit.

The manufacturers were advised of the fact, and they have notified their agent to present the shoes to Mr. Sargent. They stated in their letter that they had been making this offer for a year past and that this was the first instance where a foot big enough to fit the shoes had been found. The manufacturers also instructed their agent to have a photograph of Mr. Sargent and the shoes made and sent to them, together with full information regarding the giant. They intend to use the picture in widely advertising the occurrence.

Mr. Sargent is one of the leading farmers of this county. He is proud of his great steed and jealously defends his title as the prize "big man" by measuring up with everyone who dares dispute his claim, and in every instance so far he has come off victor.

Owingsville, Ky., March 18.—Prickly Ash, which is one mile north of this place has a tremendous fall in the rainy season is one of the most turbid and dangerous streams in this part of the State. Yesterday after one of the many recent hard rains Newton Norris undertook to cross it in a buggy with his wife and eight-year-old daughter. Midway of the creek the horse's feet were washed from under him and he fell. While Norris bailed himself cutting the harness from the horse the buggy turned over, throwing Mrs. Norris and the little girl into the middle of the current. Norris could not save them and they were rapidly borne down stream and death by drowning seemed a certainty. But Mrs. William Manley, who lives near where the Norris had undertaken to cross, without counting the danger to herself, boldly plunged into the stream and, being a fairly good swimmer, she finally succeeded in reaching Mrs. Norris just as she was sinking for the third time and by great effort got her to shore and safety, and though almost exhausted, Mrs. Manley immediately again dashed into the current and saved the child, who had by that time been washed some 200 yards down stream. Mrs. Manley is a rather fragile young woman, and says she doesn't know herself how she succeeded in getting to two people to safety.

Have you a BOY to clothe? Every mother who has a boy to buy for should have her name on our "Mother or Boy's Directory." It furnishes you with the seasons latest styles in Boys wear from 3-12 to 17 years. It costs nothing. Send your name and address to G. A. Northcott and Co., Huntington, W. Va., Boys Dept.

FALLSBURG.

It is high time that Sunday School should commence here, but it has not been decided yet who will be the superintendent.

It was reported and generally believed that Mr. Savage was going to get the place where Columbus Crank has been living, but Dr. Carter finally bought it.

Mr. Webb is well enough to work in the blacksmith shop. The high water floated down big logs and tore up the mill dam pretty badly, but Mr. Caines grinds corn yet.

These March winds have dried up the mud, but we seldom see such rough roads.

A good many people around here have been making garden for a few days past, believing that the last of March will be like a lamb, as the first was like a lion.

There has been very little sickness here, but we hear from Cox River every few days, and the last report we had had been worse.

Carl Manns has moved into the house on Horseford, where Robert Skeens used to live, and R. Saulsbury and David Marcum have moved into the Dalton houses at or near Pullers station.

The Democrats are talking some about which would be the proper man to vote for Hannah or Redwine, U.S.

WANTED!

One or two good farm hands to work on farm on Contrary. Work will last till late fall. Apply to Augustus Snyder, Louisa, or Jas. Norton, Gallop, Ky.

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